



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, December 17, 2020

Join the First Day Hike Challenge in Iowa State Parks

DES MOINES – The Iowa DNR and Travel Iowa invite Iowans to participate in the 2021 First Day Hike Challenge to ring in the New Year through the digital State Park Passport. The challenge takes the place of traditional guided hikes due to COVID-19.

“We are looking for ways to encourage both outdoor fun and social distancing,” said Todd Coffelt, Bureau Chief of Parks, Forests and Preserves. “First Day Hikes are a popular tradition in state parks, and the passport is a great way for people to enjoy winter hikes on their own or with their families.”

With the First Day Hike Challenge, park visitors can check into any of the more than 50 participating state parks on the passport from Friday, Jan. 1 through the end of Sunday, Jan. 3. Every check-in will qualify for a prize drawing of a 2-night stay at a 2-bedroom cabin at Lake Darling State Park near Brighton. Restrictions will apply on the cabin stay, with reservation fees and other business rules applying.

Visitors can go to as many parks as they wish during the weekend -- every check-in counts as a contest entry. Additionally, visitors will find trail suggestions and directions from park staff under the “More Info” tab for each park entry on the passport.

Last year, more than 4,300 people participated in hikes on New Year’s Day across Iowa. Hikers can expect to be surrounded by the quiet beauty of nature in winter, and experience spectacular views, beautiful settings and the cultural treasures offered by Iowa’s State Parks. Participants should dress for the weather, including warm, sturdy boots for winter conditions.

For more details on First Day Hikes in Iowa’s State Parks, and to find links to sign up for the Parks Passport, visit www.iowadnr.gov/firstdayhikes.